

CHAPTER 275  
CERTIFICATION OF AUTOMATIC FIRE EXTINGUISHING SYSTEM CONTRACTORS

**661—275.1(100C) Establishment of program.** There is established within the fire marshal division a fire extinguishing system contractors certification program. The program is established pursuant to Iowa Code chapter 100C.

**275.1(1) Certification required.** No person shall act as a fire extinguishing system contractor without being currently certified as a fire extinguishing system contractor by the fire marshal, except as provided in subrule 275.1(3).

**275.1(2) Endorsement.** The certification of each contractor shall carry an endorsement for one or more of the following:

- a. Automatic sprinkler system layout;
- b. Special hazards suppression systems;
- c. Installation of preengineered dry chemical or wet agent fire suppression systems;
- d. Installation of preengineered water-based fire suppression systems in one- and two-family dwellings;
- e. Testing and inspection of water-based systems; or
- f. Any combination thereof.

Any person acting as a fire extinguishing system contractor shall do so only in relation to systems covered by the endorsements on the contractor's certification.

**275.1(3) Length of certification.** Certification shall normally be for one year and shall expire on March 31 each year. A certification which is effective on a date other than April 1 shall be effective on the date on which the certification is issued and shall expire on the following March 31.

a. Certification between July 1, 2006, and October 1, 2006. A contractor may operate without certification between July 1, 2006, and September 30, 2006, as follows:

(1) Prior to August 15, 2006, the contractor may operate as a contractor only if the contractor intends to apply for certification by August 15, 2006; a contractor operating under this subparagraph may perform contracting work only within the scope of certification for which the contractor intends to apply.

(2) On or after August 15, 2006, and before October 1, 2006, the contractor may operate as a contractor subject to this chapter only if the contractor has applied for certification under this chapter. A contractor operating under this subparagraph may perform contracting work only within the scope of certification for which the contractor has applied.

b. Any certification for which application is made by August 15, 2006, and accepted, shall be effective retroactive to July 1, 2006, and appropriate fees shall be collected pursuant to rule 661—275.5(100C).

**275.1(4) Inquiries.** Inquires regarding the fire extinguishing system contractors certification program may be addressed to:

Fire Extinguishing System Contractors Certification Program  
Fire Marshal Division  
Iowa Department of Public Safety  
401 S.W. 7th Street, Suite N  
Des Moines, Iowa 50309

Inquiries may be addressed by electronic mail to [fesccp@dps.state.ia.us](mailto:fesccp@dps.state.ia.us), by telephone to (515)281-5821, or by facsimile to (515)242-6299.

**661—275.2(100C) Definitions.** The following definitions apply to rules 661—275.1(100C) through 661—275.7(100C):

*“Automatic fire extinguishing system”* means a system of devices and equipment that automatically detects a fire and discharges an approved fire extinguishing agent onto or in the area of a fire and includes automatic sprinkler systems, carbon dioxide extinguishing systems, deluge systems, automatic dry-chemical extinguishing systems, foam extinguishing systems, and halogenated extinguishing systems, or other equivalent fire extinguishing technologies recognized by the fire extinguishing system contractors advisory board.

*“Automatic sprinkler system”* means an integrated fire protection sprinkler system usually activated by heat from a fire designed in accordance with fire protection engineering standards and includes a suitable water supply. The portion of the system above the ground is a network of specially sized or hydraulically designed piping installed in a structure or area, generally overhead, and to which automatic sprinklers are connected in a systematic pattern.

*“Carbon dioxide extinguishing system”* means a system supplying carbon dioxide from a pressurized vessel through fixed pipes and nozzles and includes a manual or automatic actuating mechanism.

*“Clean agent”* means an electrically nonconducting, volatile, or gaseous fire extinguishant that does not leave a residue upon evaporation.

*“Deluge system”* means a sprinkler system employing open sprinklers attached to a piping system connected to a water supply through a valve that is opened by the operation of a detection system installed in the same area as the sprinklers.

*“Dry chemical”* means a powder composed of very small particles, usually sodium bicarbonate-, potassium bicarbonate-, or ammonium phosphate-based, with added particulate material supplemented by special treatment to provide resistance to packing, resistance to moisture absorption (caking), and the proper flow capabilities.

*“Dry pipe sprinkler system”* means an extinguishing system employing automatic sprinklers that are attached to a piping system containing air or nitrogen under pressure, the release of which (as from the opening of a sprinkler) permits the water pressure to open a valve known as a dry pipe valve, which allows the water to flow into the piping system and out the opened sprinklers.

*“Fire extinguishing system contractor”* or *“contractor”* means a person engaging in or representing oneself to the public as engaging in the activity or business of layout, installation, repair, alteration, addition, maintenance, or maintenance inspection of automatic fire extinguishing systems in this state.

*“Foam extinguishing system”* means a special system discharging foam made from concentrates, either mechanically or chemically, over the area to be protected.

*“Halogenated extinguishing system”* means a fire extinguishing system using one or more atoms of an element from the halogen chemical series of fluorine, chlorine, bromine, and iodine.

*“Layout”* means drawings, calculations and component specifications to achieve the specified system design installation. “Layout” does not include design.

*“Listed”* means equipment, materials, or services included in a list published by a nationally recognized independent testing organization concerned with evaluation of products or services that maintains periodic inspection of production of listed equipment or materials or periodic evaluation of services and whose listing states that either the equipment, material, or service meets appropriate designated standards or has been tested and found suitable for a specified purpose.

*“Maintenance inspection”* means periodic inspection and certification completed by a fire extinguishing system contractor. For purposes of this chapter, “maintenance inspection” does not include an inspection completed by a local building official, fire inspector, or insurance inspector, when acting in an official capacity.

*“Preengineered dry chemical or wet agent fire suppression system”* means any system having pre-determined flow rates, nozzle pressures and limited quantities of either agent. These systems have specific pipe sizes, maximum and minimum pipe lengths, flexible hose specifications, number of fittings and number and types of nozzles prescribed by a nationally recognized testing laboratory. The hazards against which these systems protect are specifically limited by the testing laboratory as to the type and size based upon actual fire tests. Limitations on hazards that can be protected against by these systems are contained in the manufacturer’s installation manual, which is referenced as part of the listing.

*“Preengineered water-based system”* means a packaged, water-based sprinkler system including all components connected to a water supply and designed to be installed according to pretested limitations.

*“Responsible managing employee”* means an owner, partner, officer, or manager employed full-time by a fire extinguishing system contractor who is designated as a responsible managing employee for a fire extinguishing system contractor and who meets the requirements for a responsible managing employee established in rule 661—275.3(100C).

*“Special hazards suppression system”* means a fire extinguishing system utilizing fire detection and control methods to release an extinguishing agent, other than water connected to a dedicated fire protection water supply.

*“Wet agent”* or *“wet chemical”* means an aqueous solution of organic or inorganic salts or a combination thereof that forms an extinguishing agent.

**661—275.3(100C) Responsible managing employee.** Each fire extinguishing system contractor shall designate a responsible managing employee and may designate one or more alternate responsible managing employees. A contractor may designate more than one responsible managing employee in order to satisfy the requirements for more than one endorsement as provided in subrule 275.1(2). If more than one responsible managing employee is designated, the contractor shall indicate for which responsible managing employee each designated alternate managing employee serves as an alternate.

**275.3(1)** The responsible managing employee or employees shall be designated in the application for certification; and, if a responsible managing employee is no longer acting in that role, the contractor shall so notify the fire marshal, in writing, within 30 calendar days, on a form designated by the fire marshal.

**275.3(2)** If a responsible managing employee is no longer acting in that role and the contractor has designated an alternate responsible managing employee, the alternate responsible managing employee shall become the responsible managing employee and the contractor shall so notify the fire marshal, in writing, within 30 calendar days of the date on which the preceding responsible managing employee ceased to act in that role. If the contractor has designated more than one alternate responsible managing employee, the notice to the fire marshal shall indicate which alternate responsible managing employee has assumed the position of responsible managing employee.

**275.3(3)** If a responsible managing employee designated by a fire extinguishing system contractor is no longer acting in the role of responsible managing employee and the contractor has not designated an alternate responsible managing employee, the contractor shall designate a new responsible managing employee and shall notify the fire marshal, in writing, of the designation within six months of the date on which the former responsible managing employee ceased to act in that capacity, on a form designated by the fire marshal. If the fire marshal has not been notified of the appointment of a new responsible managing employee within six months of the date on which a responsible managing employee ceased serving in that capacity, the fire marshal shall suspend the certification of the fire extinguishing system contractor.

**275.3(4)** A responsible managing employee or an alternate responsible managing employee shall meet one of the following requirements:

a. Current licensure as a professional engineer by the Iowa engineering and land surveying examining board, with competence in fire extinguishing system design.

b. Current certification by the National Institute for Certification in Engineering Technologies at level III or above in fire protection technology, for automatic sprinkler system layout, special hazards suppression systems, or both.

(1) Prior to April 1, 2008, a fire extinguishing system contractor may receive provisional certification if the person designated as the contractor's responsible managing employee has initiated procedures for obtaining certification by the National Institute for Certification in Engineering Technologies at level III in fire protection technology for automatic sprinkler system layout, special hazards suppression systems, or both, and has satisfactorily completed testing which is offered by a third party and has been approved by the fire marshal, for competency in fire protection technology for automatic sprinkler system layout, special hazards suppression systems, or both. The contractor shall provide the fire marshal with notification and documentation of the satisfactory completion of required third-party testing within 30 days after the date on which the contractor's provisional certification was initially issued.

After one year of provisional certification of the contractor, the responsible managing employee shall have current certification by the National Institute for Certification in Engineering Technologies at level II or above in fire protection technology for automatic sprinkler system layout, special hazards suppression systems, or both. Documentation that this requirement has been met shall be provided by the contractor to the fire marshal within 30 days after the one-year anniversary of the effective date of the initial provisional certification.

Provisional certification shall not be recognized on or after April 1, 2009.

(2) Reserved.

c. A contractor may install preengineered dry chemical or wet agent fire suppression systems, if the responsible managing employee meets the following requirements:

(1) Satisfactory completion of any training required by the manufacturer for each system or systems which the contractor installs; and

(2) Certification by the National Institute for Certification in Engineering Technologies at level II or above in fire protection technology, for special hazards suppression systems; certification by the National Association of Fire Equipment Distributors in preengineered kitchen fire suppression systems or preengineered industrial fire suppression systems; or satisfactory completion of an applicable training or testing program which has been approved by the fire marshal.

Prior to April 1, 2008, a contractor may receive provisional certification with endorsement for installation of dry chemical or wet agent systems if the responsible managing employee has satisfactorily completed any training required by the manufacturer for each system which the contractor installs. The provisional certification shall not be recognized on or after April 1, 2009.

d. A contractor may install preengineered water-based systems in one- or two-family dwellings if the responsible managing employee meets the following requirements:

(1) Satisfactory completion of any training required by the manufacturer for the installation of any system the contractor installs; and

(2) Satisfactory completion of an applicable training or testing program which has been approved by the fire marshal.

Until April 1, 2008, a contractor may receive provisional certification if the responsible managing employee has satisfactorily completed training required by the manufacturer for the installation of each system which the contractor installs. The provisional certification shall not be recognized on or after April 1, 2009.

*e.* A contractor may inspect and test water-based fire extinguishing systems if the responsible managing employee has current certification from the National Institute for Certification in Engineering Technologies at level III in fire protection technology, inspection and testing of water-based systems.

(1) Prior to April 1, 2008, a contractor may receive provisional certification with an endorsement for inspection and testing of water-based fire extinguishing systems if the responsible managing employee has initiated procedures for obtaining certification from the National Institute for Certification in Engineering Technologies at level III in fire protection technology, inspection and testing of water-based systems. After one year of provisional certification with an endorsement for inspection and testing of water-based fire extinguishing systems, the responsible managing employee shall have certification from the National Institute for Certification in Engineering Technologies at level II in fire protection technology, inspection and testing of water-based systems.

Provisional certification shall not be recognized on or after April 1, 2009.

(2) Reserved.

**275.3(5)** In any case in which training or testing that is offered to satisfy the requirements of this rule is required to be approved by the fire marshal, such approval is required prior to acceptance of the training or testing to meet certification requirements. Approval by the fire marshal of any training or testing to meet these requirements may be sought by the individual, firm, or organization providing the testing or training or initiated by the fire marshal. Any individual, firm or organization seeking to obtain such approval may apply to the fire marshal. An application form for approval of a testing or training program may be obtained by contacting the fire extinguishing system contractors certification program as specified in subrule 275.1(4).

**275.3(6)** Work performed by a contractor subject to these rules shall be limited to areas of competence indicated by the specific certification or certifications or other training requirements met by the responsible managing employee.

**661—275.4(100C) Certification requirements.** A fire extinguishing system contractor shall meet all of the following requirements in order to receive certification from the fire marshal and shall continue to meet all requirements throughout the period of certification. The contractor shall notify the fire marshal, in writing, on a form designated by the fire marshal, within 30 calendar days if the contractor fails to meet any requirement for certification.

**275.4(1)** The contractor shall designate one or more responsible managing employees as provided in rule 661—275.3(100C).

**275.4(2)** The contractor shall maintain general and complete operations liability insurance for the layout, installation, repair, alteration, addition, maintenance, and inspection of automatic fire extinguishing systems in the following amounts: \$500,000 per person, \$1,000,000 per occurrence, and \$1,000,000 property damage.

*a.* The carrier of any insurance coverage maintained to meet this requirement shall notify the fire marshal 30 days prior to the effective date of cancellation or reduction of the coverage.

*b.* The contractor shall cease operation immediately if the insurance coverage required by this subrule is no longer in force and other insurance coverage meeting the requirements of this subrule is not in force. A contractor shall not initiate any installation of a fire extinguishing system which cannot reasonably be expected to be completed prior to the effective date of the cancellation of the insurance coverage required by this subrule and of which the contractor has received notice, unless new insurance coverage meeting the requirements of this subrule has been obtained and will be in force upon cancellation of the prior coverage.

**275.4(3)** The contractor shall maintain current registration as a contractor with the labor services division of the Iowa workforce development department in compliance with Iowa Code chapter 91C and 875—Chapter 150, Iowa Administrative Code.

EXCEPTION: A contractor shall not be required to maintain registration with the labor services division of the Iowa workforce development department if the contractor does not meet the definition of “contractor” for purposes of Iowa Code chapter 91C and 875—Chapter 150, Iowa Administrative Code.

**275.4(4)** The contractor shall maintain compliance with all other applicable provisions of law related to operation in the state of Iowa and of any political subdivision in which the contractor is performing work.

**661—275.5(100C) Application and fees.**

**275.5(1) Application.** Any contractor seeking certification as a fire extinguishing system contractor shall submit a completed application form to the fire marshal. The application shall be filed no later than 30 days prior to the date on which certification is required or on which an existing certification expires. An application form may be obtained from the fire marshal or from the Web site of the fire extinguishing system contractor certification program ([www.state.ia.us/government/dps/fm/fesccp](http://www.state.ia.us/government/dps/fm/fesccp)). The application form shall be submitted with all required attachments and the required application fee established in subrule 275.5(2). An application shall not be considered complete unless all required information is submitted, including required attachments and fees, and shall not be processed until it is complete.

**275.5(2) Certification fee.** The certification fee shall be \$500 per year. If an application is denied, all except \$100 of the fee may be refunded if the applicant applies to the fire marshal for a refund. No refund of the certification fee shall be made if the certification is revoked or if the denial of the certification is based on the applicant’s knowingly including false or misleading information on the application.

If an application for certification provides for more than one responsible managing employee pursuant to rule 661—275.3(100C), there shall be an additional fee of \$50 for each responsible managing employee beyond the first. If an application for certification provides for more than one endorsement as provided in subrule 275.1(2), there shall be an additional fee of \$50 for each endorsement beyond the first.

EXCEPTION: If a certification is effective after April 1 and no later than June 30, the certification fee shall be \$500. The certification fee for a certification which becomes effective between July 1 and September 30 shall be \$400. The certification fee for a certification which becomes effective between October 1 and December 31 shall be \$300. The certification fee for a certification which becomes effective between January 1 and March 31 shall be \$200. If an application for certification provides for more than one responsible managing employee pursuant to rule 661—275.3(100C), there shall be an additional fee of \$50 for each responsible managing employee beyond the first. If an application for certification provides for more than one endorsement as provided in subrule 275.1(2), there shall be an additional fee of \$50 for each endorsement beyond the first.

**275.5(3) Payment.** The certification fee shall be submitted by draft, check, or money order in the applicable amount payable to the Fire Extinguishing System Contractor Certification Program. If the application is denied, the certification fee less \$100 shall be returned to the applicant, except as provided in subrule 275.5(2).

**275.5(4) Amended certification fee.** The fee for issuance of an amended certification is \$100. The fee shall be submitted with the request for an amended certification. A contractor shall request and the fire marshal shall issue an amended certificate for any of the following:

- a. A change in the designation of a responsible managing employee;
- b. A change in insurance coverage; or

c. A change in any other material information included in or with the initial or renewal application.

Other changes in the information required in the application form, including renewal of insurance coverage with a new expiration date, shall be reported to the fire marshal but shall not require issuance of an amended certification or payment of the amended certification fee.

**275.5(5) Attachments.** Required attachments to the application for certification include, but are not limited to, the following:

a. Documentation verifying that the contractor has in force the insurance coverage required by subrule 275.4(2). The documentation shall include an acknowledgment that the contractor's insurance coverage extends to any work performed by the contractor within the scope of certification pursuant to this chapter. The documentation may consist of a letter from the insurance carrier or a copy of the insurance certificate with an endorsement showing the required information.

b. Documentation verifying that the person designated as the responsible managing employee and any persons designated as alternate responsible managing employees have met the applicable certification requirements.

**661—275.6(100C) Complaints.** Complaints regarding the performance of any certified contractor, failure of a certified contractor to meet any of the requirements established in Iowa Code chapter 100C or this chapter or any other provision of law, or operation as a fire extinguishing system contractor without certification may be filed with the fire marshal. Complaints should be addressed as follows:

Fire Extinguishing System Contractors Certification Program

Fire Marshal Division

Iowa Department of Public Safety

401 S.W. 7th Street, Suite N

Des Moines, Iowa 50309

Complaints may be submitted by electronic mail to [fesccp@dps.state.ia.us](mailto:fesccp@dps.state.ia.us) or by facsimile to (515)242-6299.

Complaints should be as specific as possible and shall clearly identify the contractor against whom the complaint is filed. A form which may be used to file complaints is available on the Web site of the fire extinguishing system contractors certification program at <http://www.state.ia.us/government/dps/fm/fesccp>. Complaints may be filed without using the complaint form provided, but shall be submitted in writing. A complaint may be submitted anonymously, but if the name and contact information of the complainant are provided, the complainant will be notified of the disposition of the complaint.

**661—275.7(100C) Denial, suspension, or revocation of certification; civil penalties; and appeals.** The fire marshal may deny, suspend or revoke the certification of a contractor, or assess a civil penalty to the contractor, if any provision of these rules or any other provision of law related to operation as a fire extinguishing system contractor is violated.

**275.7(1) Denial.** The fire marshal may deny an application for certification:

a. If the applicant makes a false statement on the application form or in any other submission of information required for certification. "False statement" means providing false information or failing to include material information, such as a previous criminal conviction or action taken by another jurisdiction, when requested on the application form or otherwise in the application process.

b. If the applicant fails to meet all of the requirements for certification established in this chapter.

c. If the applicant is currently barred for cause from acting as a fire extinguishing system contractor in another jurisdiction.

*d.* If an applicant has previously been barred for cause from operating in another jurisdiction as a fire extinguishing system contractor and if the basis of that action reflects upon the integrity of the applicant in operating as a fire extinguishing system contractor. If an applicant is found to have been previously barred for cause from operating as a fire extinguishing system contractor in another jurisdiction and is no longer barred from doing so, the fire marshal shall evaluate the record of that action with regard to the likelihood that the applicant would operate with integrity as a certified contractor. If an applicant is denied under this provision, the applicant shall be notified of the specific reasons for the denial.

*e.* If the applicant has been convicted of a crime which reflects upon the integrity of the applicant in operating as a fire extinguishing system contractor. If an applicant is found to have a criminal record, the fire marshal shall evaluate that record with regard to the likelihood that the applicant would operate with integrity as a certified contractor. If an applicant is denied under this provision, the applicant shall be notified of the specific reasons for the denial.

**275.7(2) *Suspension.*** A suspension of a certification may be imposed by the fire marshal for any violation of these rules or Iowa Code chapter 100C or for a failure to meet any legal requirement to operate as a fire extinguishing system contractor in this state. Failure to provide any notice to the fire marshal as provided in these rules shall be grounds for suspension. An order of suspension shall specify the length of the suspension and shall specify that correction of all conditions which were a basis for the suspension is a condition of reinstatement of the certification even after the period of the suspension.

**275.7(3) *Revocation.*** A revocation is a termination of a certification. A certification may be revoked by the fire marshal for repeated violations or for a violation which creates an imminent danger to the safety or health of individuals protected by a fire extinguishing system incorrectly installed by a certified contractor or when information comes to the attention of the fire marshal which, if known to the fire marshal when the application was being considered, would have resulted in denial of the certification.

A new application for certification from a contractor whose certification had previously been revoked shall not be considered for a period of one year after the effective date of the revocation and, in any event, until every condition which was a basis for the revocation has been corrected. The fire marshal may specify in the revocation order a longer period than one year before a new application for certification may be considered. When a new application for certification from a contractor whose certification was previously revoked is being considered, the applicant may be denied certification based upon the same information which was the basis for revocation even after any such period established by the fire marshal has expired.

**275.7(4) *Civil penalties.*** The fire marshal may impose a civil penalty of up to \$500 per day during which a violation has occurred and for every day until the violation is corrected. A civil penalty may be imposed in lieu of or in addition to a suspension or may be imposed in addition to a revocation. A civil penalty shall not be imposed in lieu of a revocation.

**275.7(5) *Suspension or revocation for nonpayment of child support.*** The following procedures shall apply to actions taken by the department on a certificate of noncompliance received from the Iowa department of human services pursuant to Iowa Code chapter 252J:

*a.* The notice required by Iowa Code section 252J.8 shall be served upon the certified contractor by restricted certified mail, return receipt requested, or personal service in accordance with Iowa Rule of Civil Procedure 1.305. Alternatively, the contractor may accept service personally or through authorized counsel.

*b.* The effective date of revocation or suspension of certification of a contractor, as specified in the notice required by Iowa Code section 252J.8, shall be 60 days following service upon the contractor.



c. Contractors shall keep the fire marshal informed of all court actions and all child support recovery unit actions taken under or in connection with Iowa Code chapter 252J and shall provide the fire marshal with copies, within 7 days of filing or issuance, of all applications filed with the district court pursuant to Iowa Code section 252J.9, all court orders entered in such actions, and withdrawals of certificates of noncompliance by the child support recovery unit.

d. All applicable fees for an application or reinstatement must be paid by the contractor before a certificate will be issued, renewed, or reinstated after the fire marshal has denied the issuance or renewal of a certification or has suspended or revoked a certification pursuant to Iowa Code chapter 252J.

e. In the event a contractor files a timely district court action following service of a notice pursuant to Iowa Code sections 252J.8 and 252J.9, the fire marshal shall continue with the intended action described in the notice upon the receipt of a court order lifting the stay, dismissing the action, or otherwise directing the department to proceed. For the purpose of determining the effective date of revocation or suspension of the certification, the department shall count the number of days before the action was filed and the number of days after the action was disposed of by the court.

f. Suspensions or revocations imposed pursuant to this subrule may not be appealed administratively within the department of public safety.

NOTE: The procedures established in subrule 275.7(5) implement the requirements of Iowa Code chapter 252J. The provisions of Iowa Code chapter 252J establish mandatory requirements for an agency which administers a certification program, such as the one established in this chapter, and provide that actions brought under these provisions are not subject to contested case procedures established in Iowa Code chapter 17A, but must be appealed directly to district court.

**275.7(6) Appeals.** Any denial, suspension, or revocation of a certification, or any civil penalty imposed upon a certified contractor under this rule, other than one imposed pursuant to subrule 275.7(5), may be appealed by the contractor within 14 days of receipt of the notice. Appeals of actions taken by the fire marshal under this rule shall be to the commissioner of public safety and shall be treated as contested cases, following the procedures established in rules 661—10.301(17A) through 661—10.332(17A).

These rules are intended to implement Iowa Code chapter 100C.

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CHAPTERS 276 to 290

Reserved